



# PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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If you drink no  
Noir, you Pinot  
Noir

## Assorted Recently Reviewed Pinot Noir

### Cobden Wini Wines, Napa, CA

Proprietor and winemaker Mark Davis crafts small amounts of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir since 2012. An honors graduate in viticulture and enology from UC Davis, Mark also makes wines for other Napa Valley wineries. Tasting is available by appointment at The Wine Thief in Napa. Visit [www.twtnapa.com](http://www.twtnapa.com) or [www.cobdenwini.com](http://www.cobdenwini.com).

**2019 Cobden Wini Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., pH 3.69, TA 0.53, 125 cases, \$55. Released 11/23/21. A blend of grapes from Hogan's Run and Moore Family vineyards including clones 667, 777 and Pommard. Aged 14 months on the lees with monthly stirring in 40% new and 60% once-used French oak barrels. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, rose petal and Doublemint gum lead the way. Light to mid-weight in style and highly agreeable with plenty of black cherry flavor saturating the mid-palate and finish. Perfect harmony insures the wine's allure at the dinner table. 92*

**2019 Cobden Wini Hogan's Run Vineyard Reserve Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.61, 100 cases, \$75. Released 2/1/22. Clones 667 and 777. Aged 16 months on the lees with a monthly stirring in 50% new French oak barrels. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. A very complex nose of earth, black raspberry, blackest cherry, herb garden and a hint of oak leads off. Hearty in a mid-weight plus style, with mouth filling and compelling dark cherry and berry flavors. Very long in the mouth through the cherry-laced finish. 94*



### DION Vineyard, Chehalem Mountains, OR

Those who follow the *PinotFile* know that DION Vineyard is one of my favorite Willamette Valley wineries. The Old Vines bottling has consistently scored in the mid to high 90s through the years but the winery's other Pinot Noir bottlings until 2019 have been superb as well.

The winery's vintage notes indicate the following. "2019 was a return to a more "classic" Oregon vintage. That is, cooler with some rain at harvest. The resulting wines are more elegant than usual with great aging potential. Bloom kicked off on May 30 (a near-normal starting time). Weather during bloom was good for flowering resulting in a near normal, long-term average crop size. The 2019 summer was mellow with high temperatures never breaking 100°F and only crested above 90°F on 9 days. The warmer spring ensured that the year's overall heat units were more comparable to 2009 and 2019. Pinot Noir harvest began on September 14 and continued all the way to October 3. There were over 2 inches of rain during the picking window similar to 2007

and 2012. Combines with the modest summer heat resulted in lower sugars.” Only 50 cases of the Old Vines Reserve Pinot Noir were produced in 2019 and have needed more time in the cellar before release.

For more information and to obtain wines, visit [www.dionvineyard.com](http://www.dionvineyard.com).

**2019 DION Winemaker’s Reserve Limited Release Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir** 12.5% alc., 75 cases, \$50. Sourced from the best blocks in the estate vineyard and chosen barrels that were most expressive of the vintage. Harvest Brix 21.4°-21.6°. Primarily Dijon clones. Aged for 13 months in French oak barrels. *Light garnet color in the glass. Deep, deep cherry perfume with a subtle oak compliment. Light to mid-weight in style, with loads of energetic cherry and spice to delight. Slightly creamy in texture with gentle tannins and an extremely long finish. Forward drinking in an easygoing package.* **94**



## Dutton Estate Winery, Sebastopol, CA

Dutton Ranch farms more than 80 different vineyards in the Russian River Valley. The Dutton family represents six generations of forward-thinking West Sonoma County farmers. The Duttons have a deep commitment to sustainable farming. The winemaker is Bobby Donnell. For more information, visit [www.duttonestate.com](http://www.duttonestate.com).

**2019 Dutton Estate Winery Manzana Vineyard Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.55, 233 cases, \$66. Released June 2022. Clones 115 and faux 828. Harvest Brix 25.0°. Aged in 50% new French oak barrels. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Lovely aromas of black cherry, clove, turned earth and balsam. Very ripe fruited profile including flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, cassis, licorice and root beer. A touch of alcoholic warmth shows up on the modest finish.* **89**

**2019 Dutton Estate Winery Thomas Road Vineyard Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.55, 233 cases, \$70. Released June 2022. This vineyard is located in the Green Valley AVA of the Russian River Valley AVA. Harvest Brix 24.4°. 100% clone 115. Aged for 11 months in 50% new French oak barrels. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Fruit never appears on the nose, even when checked the following day from an opened bottle. Aromas of earthy flora dominate the nose. Mid-weight flavors of blackberry and black grape with a touch of spice. Sleek in the mouth with a harmonious touch of oak. The wine lacks uplifting acidity and the fruit tastes mildly roasted.* **88**

**2019 Dutton Estate Winery La Familia Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.57, 234 cases, \$74. Released June 2022. Sourced from Kozolowski Family Vineyard located in the Green Valley AVA of the Russian River Valley AVA. The vineyard was once the site of the largest raspberry patch in Northern California. It was converted to a vineyard in 1998 with planting of Pinot Noir clones Pommard, Swan and Dijon 115. This bottling only contains the Pommard clone. Harvest Brix 24.5°. Aged in 50% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The aromas of black cherry and peppery herbs are appealing. A seductive, mid-weight style with a delicious core of well-spiced cherry fruit. A debutante of a wine with a silky mouth feel and a delicate but juicy cherry-driven finish.* **92**

## McIntyre Family Wines, Santa Lucia Highlands, CA

Steve McIntyre is one of the most respected and knowledgeable viticulturists in California. As owner and operator of Monterey Pacific, he farms 16,000 acres in Monterey County and has planted or farmed nearly one-quarter of the vineyards in the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA. The 80-acre McIntyre Estate Vineyard lies in the “sweet spot” of this rolling bench land region. The vineyard was among the first properties in the Santa

Lucia Highlands to be SIP (Sustainability in Practice) Certified and McIntyre Estate Vineyard is regeneratively farmed. For more information, visit [www.mcintyrevineyards.com](http://www.mcintyrevineyards.com).

**2018 McIntyre Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.72, TA 0.62, 1,561 cases, \$28. A combination of Swan clone from Escolle Road Vineyard and clone 115 and “Old Vine” selection from the Estate Vineyard. Indigenous yeast fermentations. *Light garnet color in the glass. Enticing scents of cherry, white pepper and brown spices. Lighter in weight but with a redeeming impression of red cherry and red berry fruit flavors. Nicely composed in a carefree style with good crispness. An excellent daily drinker for the dinner table.* **90**

**2019 McIntyre McIntyre Estate Vineyards Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.72, TA 0.60, 952 cases, \$38. A combination of Swan and “Old Vine” selections and clones 777 and 115 from the McIntyre Estate Vineyard. Indigenous yeast fermentations. *Light garnet color in the glass. The aromas of dark red cherry, spice and earthy flora lead to a very satisfying mid-weight core of black cherry, clove and baking spice flavors. Highly approachable with only minimal tannins showing up on the modest but likable finish.* **90**



**2017 McIntyre McIntyre Estate Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.8% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.61, 346 cases, \$48. A combination of the best blocks, the best lots, and the best barrels from the 80-acre Estate Vineyard with the core from the “Old Vine” Block. Indigenous yeast fermentations. *Dark garnet color in the glass. A very ripe fruit profile dominates the nose and palate. Aromas of blueberry, boysenberry, raisin and almond paste. Full-weighted style with bold flavors of jammy boysenberry, black raspberry and raisin. The wine finishes with a flourish of intensely-flavored fruit compote.* **88**

**2018 McIntyre McIntyre Estate Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.72, TA 0.58, 510 cases, \$48. An amalgamation of the best blocks, the best lots and the best barrels from the 80-acre Estate Vineyard. The core comes from the “Old Vine” Block planted on its own roots more than four decades ago and is one of the oldest plantings of Pinot Noir in the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA. Indigenous yeast fermentations. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Shy aromas of earth-kissed dark fruits, spice and toast. Joyously fruit-laden in a mid to full-weight, charming style with a thin overcoat of oak and modest supportive tannins.* **91**

**2015 McIntyre McIntyre Estate Vineyard Block 3 Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.59, 1091 cases, \$56. A combination of Swan, Dijon 115, and “old Vine” clones from the Estate Vineyard. Indigenous yeast fermentations. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Reserved aromas take time to emerge include boysenberry, violets, spice and smoke. Dominated by very ripe purple and black fruits in a mid-weight plus style. Moderate tannins support the fresh fruit load. (Best of two bottles sampled).* **91**

**2016 McIntyre McIntyre Estate Vineyard Block 3 Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.59, 104 cases, \$56. A combination of the Swan clone and the “Old Vine” Block. The crop was thinned to a maximum of three tons per acre or 1.5 lbs of fruit per foot of cordon. Indigenous yeast fermentations. *Dark garnet color in the glass. The nose offers aromas of blueberry-pomegranate and a compliment of toasty oak. An onslaught of purple and black berry fruits greet the palate. Not particularly nuanced but plenty of ostentatious fruit. Modest tannins, low acidity and a finish of modest length. The slightest warmth shows up on the finish.* **91**

**2015 McIntyre McIntyre Estate Vineyard Old Vine Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.57, 98 cases, \$65. The “Old Vine” Block was planted on its own roots more than four decades ago, making it one of the oldest plantings of Pinot Noir in the Santa Lucia Highlands. Indigenous yeast fermentations. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, woodland and burnt toast. A pleasant wine on the palate but not what I have come to expect from an old vine bottling. There is simply too much oak overlay that suffocates the black cherry core of fruit. The finish lacks the length I expect from old vine Pinot Noir.* **89**

**2019 McIntyre McIntyre Estate Vineyard McIntyre Winemaker Series Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir**

14.6% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.55, 180 cases, \$56. A field blend of equal parts Swan and Calera selections along with Dijon 115 clone. Crafted by veteran winemaker Don Van Staavern who has 50 years of experience. 15% whole cluster. Aged 13 months with monthly lees stirring. *Alluring aromas of black raspberry jam, black cherry and rose petal. The flavors echo the nose in a middleweight style with added flavors of clove and spice. Seamless in style, with reserved tannins and a lengthy finish. Highly enjoyable. 94*



## Taft Street Winery, Sebastopol, CA

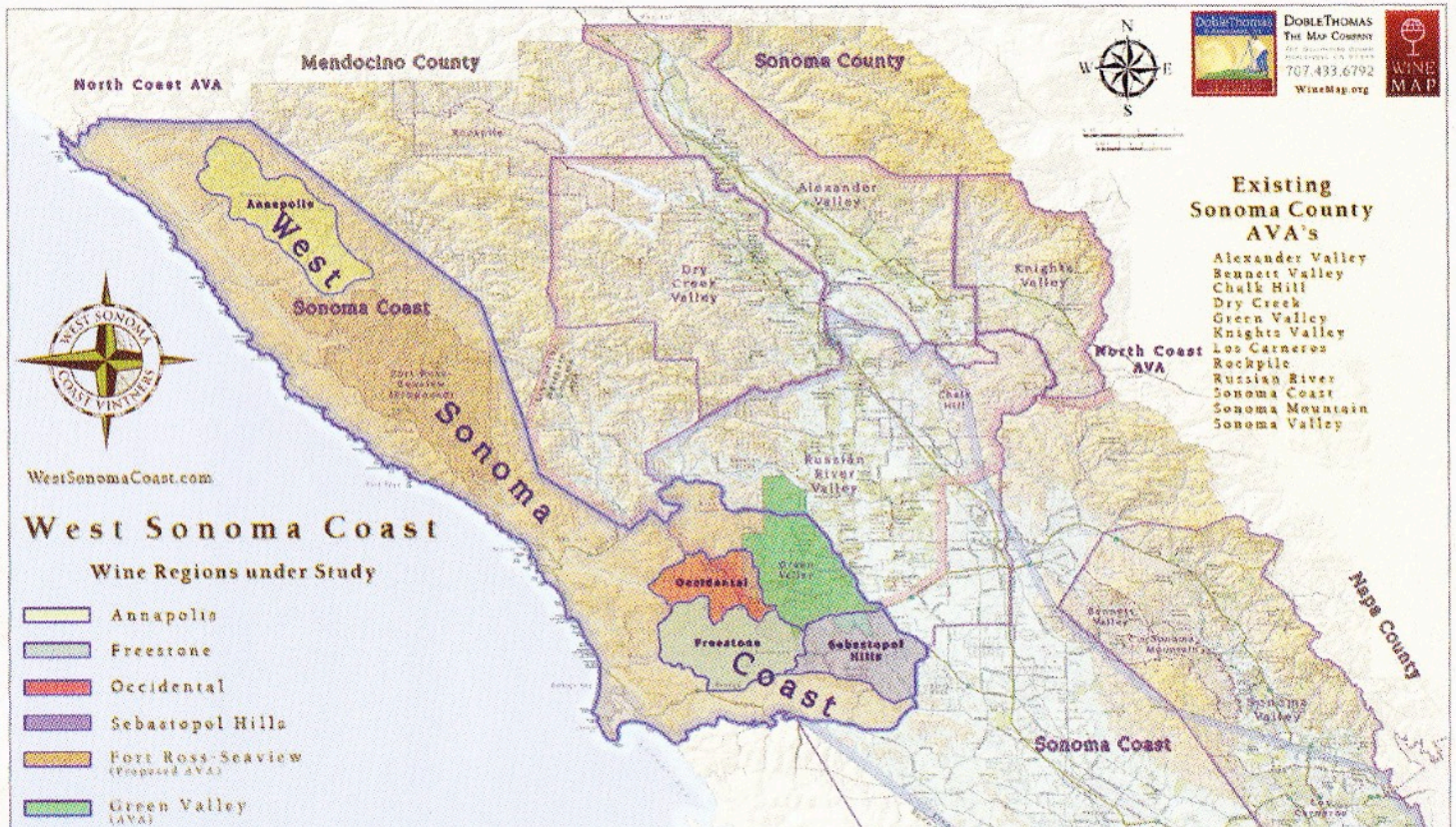
This winery began in a garage more than 40 years ago. It remains family owned and operated since 1979. The latest winemaker since 2017 has been Melissa Kuhn, formerly at nearby Owl Ridge Wine Services. The winery's detailed history is told at [www.taftstreetwinery.com](http://www.taftstreetwinery.com). Taste in the winery's space by appointment.

**2019 Taft Street Winery Zachary Hill Vineyard, Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., 160 cases, \$42. Released April 2022. The vineyard is located in the cooler and windier Sebastopol Hills neighborhood of the Russian River Valley. Aged 10 months in 30% new French oak barrels. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Highly seductive aromas of cherry reduction, dark rose petal, barnyard and a compliment of oak. Mid-weight plus in style with the juicy essence of black cherry and blackberry fruits infused with toasty oak, animale and spice. Suave tannins embellish the fruit. The slightest heat shows up at the finish. 92*

**2019 Taft Street Winery Fifty Five Thirty Seven Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., 132 cases, \$42. Released May 2022. Aged 10 months in 30% new French oak barrels. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with scents of black cherry, toast and floral aspects. Mid-weight oak-kissed core of black cherry and purple berry fruits framed by mild tannins that infuse the fruit on the somewhat persistent finish. Nicely balanced and easy to like. 91*

# Newsworthy Briefs

**New West Sonoma Coast AVA** The TTB approved the newly established West Sonoma Coast AVA. Located within the westernmost part of Sonoma County, the West Sonoma Coast AVA contains about 50 vineyards planted primarily to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The AVA has a unique marine-influenced terroir and represents a very cold, marginal viticultural region. West Sonoma Coast is the 19th AVA in Sonoma County. It contains three sub-regions from north to south: Annapolis, Fort Ross-Seaview AVA and Freestone-Occidental. Elevation ranges from 400 to 1,800 feet with vineyards planted on relatively steep ridge tops near the Pacific Ocean, both above and below the fog line. Temperatures are at least 10 or more degrees cooler than the rest of the Sonoma Coast AVA. The wines tend to have juicy acidity, moderate alcohol, and pure fruit flavors. For more information, visit [www.westsonomacoast.com](http://www.westsonomacoast.com), the website for the West Sonoma Coast Vintners association that promotes the individuality of the West Sonoma Coast AVA.



**Mr. Pinot Passes Away** Josh Jensen, affectionately called “Mr Pinot,” first planted grapevines at a remote property on Mt. Harlan in the Gabilan Mountains in 1974 at a time when he was among a select few attempting to farm Pinot Noir in California. Jensen’s remarkable story and subsequent success were first told in detail in 1993 in the first edition of the book, *The Heartbreak Grape, A Journey in Search of the Perfect Pinot Noir*, by Marq de Villiers. A completely revised and updated version was published in 2006. His saga is an inspiration for anyone trying to follow their passion for Pinot Noir. Jensen’s efforts found vindication and his Pinot Noirs from Calera Wine Co became hugely popular and among the top echelon in California. I have written extensively about Jensen and the Calera wines in the *PinotFile* on at least six occasions dating back to 2007 and have reviewed more Calera Pinot Noirs than those from almost any other California producer. Jensen retired at age 73, sold Calera Wine Co to the Duckhorn Wine Co., and passed away at age 78 in June 2022.

**Sean Thackrey Lost to Cancer** Thackrey, an eccentric, some say, enigmatic winemaker who crafted very distinctive wines at his home in Bolinas, CA, died in June 2022 at the age of 79 after a 10-year battle with cancer. He liked to tell the story that he loved the view from the house he built but wanted to spruce up the fence, so he planted grapevines along its base which eventually produced grapes that led him to make wine. Although he is best known for a number of red varietals other than Pinot Noir named after constellations, he did begin crafting “Andromeda Pinot Noir” with the 2002 vintage sourced from Devil’s Gulch Vineyard in Marin

County. Thackrey aimed for a Pinot Noir “that is uniquely expressive and one that is wilder and more mysterious and not meant to be light and simple.” My reviews of these wines from 2002-2015 confirm this character.

**New Winemaker at Dutton-Goldfield** Melissa Stackhouse, who apprenticed at Robert Mondavi Winery, Sterling Vineyards, Joseph Phelps Winery, and Peter Michael Winery, and later was the winemaker at La Crema, J Vineyards & Winery, Meiomi, and Simi, is now winemaker for Dutton-Goldfield Winery that is based in Sebastopol. Dan Goldfield, now age 65, wants to step back a bit and wanted a winemaker to take over the day-to-day responsibilities of overseeing the winery’s production facility (where they have custom crush customers as well) and assume the winemaking. Dan is still very involved and plans to lead the direction of the Dutton-Goldfield wines and participate in tastings for many years to come. Visit [www.duttongoldfield.com](http://www.duttongoldfield.com).

**Bad News in 2022 for Oregon Vineyards** An unexpected frost hit Oregon vineyards April 11-15 with overnight temperatures decreasing into the mid-20s in some locations. The timing was disastrous for those grape buds that were emerging from their winter dormancy. Vineyard management consultant Stirling Fox thinks the Willamette Valley could lose 50% of its annual grape crop making it a worse vintage than 2020 that suffered significant grape loss from wildfire-induced smoke taint. Pinot Noir and Chardonnay bud earlier than other varieties making them particularly vulnerable to early frosts. Undoubtedly, the 2022 crop will be small but the full extent of the damage will only be fully revealed at harvest.

**Andrew Jeffords calls “Pinotism” a Cult Within the Wine World** This post led to an article in *Edible Arts* online by Dwight Farrow ([www.foodandwineaesthetics.com](http://www.foodandwineaesthetics.com)) published on June 8, 2022. Farrow notes, “Jeffords is describing the cult-like exultation exhibited by Pinot Noir’s most dedicated fans. No other grape quite induces the pious reverence one finds among those who have become entranced by Pinot’s considerable charm. Both Jeffords and Farrow consider themselves former members of the cult because “its too damn expensive and most affordable Pinot Noir is either undrinkable or at best disappointing. But more importantly, there are just too many good wines out there with interesting differences to warrant the exclusivity of cult-like allegiance.” It is true that Burgundy wines have become outrageously expensive and domestic ultra-premium Pinot Noirs range from \$70-\$125, but once you experience a sublime Pinot Noir, it is very hard to resign your cult membership. Better for your psyche to just open your wallet and say, “Pinot.”

**Joseph Phelps Vineyards Becomes Part of LVMH** Joseph Phelps Vineyards has grown from 1973 as a 600-acre cattle ranch to an internationally acclaimed winery today. LVMH is the trusted steward of historic wineries like Dom Perignon, Chateau d’Yquem, and Chateau Cheval Blanc, among others, LVMH is situated to stay loyal to the founding roots of Joseph Phelps and the winery’s experience for the consumer will remain unchanged and the St. Helena winery is open as usual for tastings and visits.

**On the Wine & Health Front** (1) A study published this year in the journal *Nutrients* followed male Greek patients with coronary heart disease (CHD) in a randomized, single-blind study. The results showed that those who consumed wine in moderation had much lower rates of oxidative stress (a factor in heart damage) compared to patients who abstained or drank spirits. Presumably, the cause of this reductive effect was polyphenolic compounds in wine that have the ability to counter oxidative stress. (2) A study published in *Brain Sciences* looked at the brain benefits of wine, coffee and tea. Data was collected from 350,000 participants ages 38 to 73 in the United Kingdom cohort. Among all participants, moderate wine drinkers (red, white and sparkling wines were grouped together) had a 19 percent lower risk of dementia than non-wine drinkers. Wine-drinking men showed a 17 percent lower risk while wine-drinking women showed no statistically significant difference compared to non-wine drinkers. Tea showed a similar effect to wine but coffee has no statistically significant difference in risk. People who drank three to six cups of tea per day had a 31 percent lower risk of dementia. Unlike coffee, both tea and wine contain high amounts of polyphenolic compounds. The authors of the study concluded: “The potential neuroprotective effect of wine might be caused by natural ingredients of wine not present in non-wine beverages, such as the phenolic substance resveratrol found in the skin of red grapes.” (3) Research was published this year in the journal *Frontiers in Nutrition* titled *Association Between Wine Consumption and Cognitive Decline in Older People: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Longitudinal Studies*. Members of the International Scientific Forum on Alcohol Research reviewed this research. The results showed that, in almost every study, both wine consumption within the usual guidelines (no more than 2 drinks/day for men or 1 drink/day for women) as well as consumption in excess of these limits, were similarly associated with a lower risk of cognitive decline. For studies providing data on the amount of

alcohol consumed, the risk of cognitive decline was reduced by 41% for both wine consumers drinking within the recommended guidelines as well as those reporting wine consumption in excess of the guidelines when compared with abstainers. Forum members were critical of some aspects of this study including the lack of inclusion of potential effects of confounders on cognition. There remain questions regarding the effects of wine and other alcoholic beverages on cognition. But, when compared with non-drinking or drinking of other beverages, extensive research supports health and mortality advantages when wine is consumed moderately and especially with meals. (4) A peer-reviewed article appeared in *Lancet* in July 2022 that suggested that there are no health benefits to drinking alcohol, only health risk for young adults ages 15-38. For adults over 40, the health risks from alcohol consumption vary by age and region but consuming a small amount of alcohol such as drinking between one and two 3-4 ounce glasses of red wine can provide some health benefits such as reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and diabetes. (5) The TTB has issued guidance on health-related marketing claims in a four-part newsletter. "TTB advertising regulations prohibit any health-related statement that is untrue in any particular or tends to create a misleading impression as to the effects of alcohol consumption on health." (6) The results from a Global Burden of Diseases study from the University of Washington in Seattle were announced this week. Researchers found that for people ages 15-39, there is no health benefit to drinking alcohol, only health risks. For those older than 40, consuming a small amount of alcohol daily (one or two 3.4 fluid ounces of 13% ABV red wine, a can or bottle of 3% ABV beer, or a shot of spirits at 40% ABV) can provide health benefits, including reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and diabetes. (7) Monitoring blood alcohol Levels with your phone may soon be a reality. A team of biomedical engineers has invented an easy-to-use wearable sensor device that measures alcohol in your system via a smartphone app. It also measures blood sugar and lactate levels. The project is in the early stages but the hope is that it will be brought to market soon.

**Want to Join the Wine Business?** Five Wells Estate & Vineyards in Sebastopol, California, consists of 72 +/- acres with 35 +/- acres planted to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay located in the Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast AVAs. Offered at \$10,500,000. Presented by Jeff Bounsall Real Estate at [www.jmbland.com](http://www.jmbland.com).



**Wines of the Santa Cruz Mountains Taste of Terroir Dinner Series** Vintners of the Santa Cruz Mountains are presenting Taste of Terroir dinners featuring award-winning wines and incredible food by local chefs. These dinners are an opportunity to meet the winemakers, enjoy farm-to-table cuisine and taste the variety of wines of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Each dinner features different wineries from around the region. The schedule: Sunday, July 24 - Wine Amongst the Redwoods with Big Basin Vineyards; Wednesday, August 17 - Wines of the Iconic Ridge Monte Bello with Ridge Vineyards; Sunday, August 21 - Wines of Corralitos with Lester Estate Wines; Friday, September 9 - Wines Influenced by the Pacific and San Francisco

Bay with Thomas Fogarty Winery; and Friday, November 4 - Premier Cruz with House Family Vineyards. For more information and tickets, visit [www.winesofthesantacruzmountains.com](http://www.winesofthesantacruzmountains.com).

**Sta. Rita Hills Wine & Fire 2022** Limited tickets are now on sale for both individual events and a Wine and Fire Weekend Package. The Barn Party Kick-Off Event at the reconstructed barn at The Hilt Winery will be on August 18 (\$125 pp). The La Paulee Dinner at Babcock Winery on Friday, August 19, will be honoring Vintner of the Year Rick Longoria and feature a BBQ dinner. Guests are encouraged to bring their special bottles to share (\$150 pp). On Saturday, August 20, the Speed Tasting with a Winemaker Event will be held at Margerum Winery (\$75 pp). On the evening of August 20, the Grand Tasting will be held at La Purisma Mission in Lompoc (\$120 pp). Sunday, August 21, is Funday where guests are invited to visit their favorite wineries for special events. A Wine and Fire Passport gives guests the opportunity to visit participating tasting rooms and enjoy 2 for 2 benefits and is good from August 18 through August 21 (\$40). Shuttle tickets (\$25 per event) are available with several pickups at Lompoc Hotels. For more information and tickets, visit the Sta. Rita Hills Winegrower's Alliance website at [www.staritahills.com](http://www.staritahills.com).

**Inflation Taking Aim at the Wine Business** Bevinars by Mark Oldman (a leading company for virtual wine classes) reports that a survey of more than 500 wine enthusiasts found that  $\frac{2}{3}$  are feeling the pinch of inflation and almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  said they had reduced their wine consumption at home or dining out, and others were opting for cheaper bottles or boxed wine. My son, who is the COO of a well-known winery in Napa, told me that shipping charges for wine have skyrocketed with shipping companies adding fuel surcharges. Jamie Kutch, proprietor and winemaker at Kutch Wines in Sonoma, lamented in his recent wine offering, "It pains me to have to increase prices to you, my loyal customers. That said, on my end things like glass costs are up in price by 65%! Corks, capsules, labels, barrels, warehousing, etc., are all up in price. One of my important vineyard sources, McDougall Ranch, has relentlessly raised fruit costs each year." Having not taken a price increase in many years, I hope you understand." (Jamie raised his 2020 McDougall Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir price modestly to \$69)

Speaking of inflation, how about a four-pack of either Pinot Noir or two Pinot Noirs and two Chardonnays for \$800! The second releases from Michael Brughelli's 2019 wines came out recently. Brughelli had spent seven years directing wine sales at Bien Nacido, departing in 2019. While there, he launched the Scar of the Sea label which became very successful. In 2020, Brughelli sold his portion of the label to Mikey Giugni in to launch his eponymous label. He is also the winemaker for Folded Hills based in Gaviota. The Brughelli wines, which are a blend of multiple vineyards rather than a single site are vinified at nearby Au Bon Climat Winery. Some wine critics have called the 2018 Brughelli Pinot Noir one of the very best in Santa Barbara County. Consumers must join the Brughelli Society (free) to obtain the allocated wines. Visit [www.brughelliwine.com](http://www.brughelliwine.com).

**VinGardeValise** This luggage is a sturdy solution for those who travel with wine.



It's a line of tough suitcases that are gentle on glass, thanks to dense foam inserts created to cradle wine bottles. The VinGardeValise Piccolo (pictured below) doubles as an anytime, anywhere carry-on piece of luggage or as a checked wine travel case to travel safely with up to 5 bottles of wine and your clothes and



belongings on the other side. Available through Amazon or [www.flywithwine.com](http://www.flywithwine.com). FlyWithWine also offers a unique wineglass carrying case that makes it easy to travel with two wine glasses to restaurants, wine tasting, and other venues where the wine glasses being offered don't measure up to fine wine enjoyment. The wine glass case inserts will accommodate most major branded Universal mouth blown and machine blown glasses such as Zalto, Spiegelau, and Scott Zwiesel.

**Red Blotch Update (For Serious Wine Geeks Only)** If you are a regular reader of the *PinotFile*, you know that I have published considerable information about the Red Blotch infestation of Pinot Noir. Here is the latest information. UC Davis researchers presented updates and recommendations on red blotch issues and management during a "Grapevine Red Blotch Disease Symposium" on March 16, 2022. The symposium included the results of research funded since 2019 under an ongoing multi-year grant through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Speciality Crop Research Initiative (SCRIZO) called, "Ecobiology, Impact, and Management of Grapevine Red Blotch Virus and its Vector(s) in California and Oregon Vineyards."



Red blotch disease is caused by grapevine red blotch virus (GRBV), and its potential vectors, have been studied in California since 2013. GRBV impacts grape and wine quality by impacts including inhibited or delayed grape ripeness, lower Brix levels, lower anthocyanin levels in grape berries, reduced berry weight, and lower alcohol, color, and overall quality in resulting wines.

Professor Dr Anita Oberholster, the grant project director, cautioned, "Red blotch disease impacts can vary greatly by site and season within a variety," and emphasized that differences in growing season conditions can result in highly variable red blotch impacts. A trial found that when more than 15% red blotch positive fruit is fermented with red blotch negative fruit it will have negative quality impacts on the final wine. Oberholster summarized, "At this point, longer hang-time seems to be the best thing we can do to decrease the difference between red blotch positive and red blotch negative wines."

A number of species of treehopper and leafhopper insects have been evaluated by entomologists as possible GRBV vectors in trials since 2013. GRBV disease is still not well understood and the vector/pathogen relationship is difficult to study. In 2016, UCD researchers did identify *Spissistilus festinus*, the three-cornered alfalfa hopper (TCAH) is able to transmit GRBV from infected grapevines to uninfected grapevines in laboratory and greenhouse trials. However, knowledge about its transmission efficiency and field transmission is still unclear. Researchers have been monitoring and mapping vineyards in California and Oregon where red blotch

is present with patterns of GRBV infection that are consistent with being spread by a vector. TCAH did not always explain the incidence of red blotch in some of those vineyards, and it was not present in all locations.

*Scaphytopius graneticus*, a leafhopper, can acquire GRBV and it feeds on grapevines as a preferred host, but not much is known about this insect. It has been found in vineyards in the Central Valley, Central Coast, Sierra Foothills, and Napa and Sonoma Counties. Entomologist Dr Kent Daane said, "We can't say for sure that 'Scaphy' is a vector, but we are leaning toward it."

Daane also pointed out that roguing infected vines in vineyards and replanting with clean vines is effective in reducing red blotch spread, but one cannot use insecticides to pray the way out of this problem.

UC Davis researcher, Justin Tanner, reported on crop level mitigation to control GRBV. In a study on a Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard, he found, "applying more water or modifying the crop level by cluster thinning did not bring the total soluble solids, sugar levels or anthocyanin levels up to uninfected levels."



## Please! Submit Wines by Invitation Only

As I have slowed my journalistic work to a leisurely pace, I only accept a limited number of Pinot Noir wines for review and only by pre-arrangement or invitation. Meanwhile, I am currently training my protege (see above)

This has caused some confusion among wineries wishing to submit their wines for review since I continue to publish reviews of some wines.

I am not trying to be snobby or exclusive but simply want to reduce my work load after enjoyably publishing the time-consuming *PinotFile* for 20 years.

I welcome inquiries from interested wineries ([princeofpinot@gmail.com](mailto:princeofpinot@gmail.com)) and i will respond if and/or when a window for Pinot Noir submission is available. Sorry, but I will no longer review Pinot Noir wines that arrive at my wine locker without pre-arrangement.